

HOMELESS CalWORKs FAMILY PROJECT (HCFP)

Fact Sheet

Introduction: In 2002, a pilot project was conducted in the 1st Supervisorial District to address homelessness in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles. The project's goal was to assist homeless families with mental health issues living in Skid Row with securing permanent housing over a relatively limited period of time (approximately 6 months). In September 2003, this project expanded to include the San Gabriel Valley area. Because of its positive outcome, for 2004-2005, four additional service areas, that include the other four supervisorial districts, were added. These additional areas are serviced by DPSS offices in South Central, East Valley, Norwalk and Pomona. Currently, the six DPSS project sites are Metro Family, East Valley, Pomona, Norwalk, El Monte and South Central.

The project requires ongoing collaboration between **Los Angeles County Departments of Public Social Services (DPSS), Mental Health (DMH), Public Health (DPH), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and Los Angeles County Community Development Commission Housing Authority (Section 8)**, who have continued to initiate innovative procedures within their departments in order to guarantee prompt access to services and resources necessary to end the homeless status of identified families.

Object of Project: To move homeless families with mental health issues into emergency shelters, then to transitional housing while stabilizing, and finally into permanent housing, during a relatively short period of time (approximately 6 months) by addressing any barriers that prevent them from obtaining housing.

Process of the Project: Families are identified as potential candidates by DPSS eligibility staff or any other community agency. A family must meet the DPSS definition of homelessness and have a mental health need. Once identified, the family is referred to the Mental Health Provider for an overview of the project and initial mental health assessment.

A family must be willing to participate in all the mandatory activities of the project before they are accepted into the project. The activities include but are not limited to:

- Mental Health assessment and services (*this is a main criteria of the project*);
- Remain eligible for CalWORKs benefits and cooperate with Welfare-to-Work activities through GAIN (as required for CalWORKs eligibility);
- Move from homelessness to emergency shelters and transitional housing where available in LA County;
- Provide all necessary forms/documents for Section 8 applications including fingerprints and agreements for background checks; and
- Remain in constant communication with the agencies involved.

Benefits: Families participating in the project will receive a wide range of assistance from all the agencies involved in order to reach the desired goal of acquiring permanent housing. Some of the benefits include:

- Emergency shelter (for up to 120 days);
- Movement to transitional housing when openings occur (for 6 months to 2 years);
- Transportation and childcare;
- Employment & training opportunities;
- Job leads;
- Intensive case management;
- Individual and family mental health services;
- Substance abuse counseling/treatment;
- Agency assistance with completion of paperwork/applications;
- Interaction with other families;
- Informational group meetings with discussions and presentations including parenting, household budgeting, referrals to other agency and community resources, renter guidance;
- Become more independent and self-sufficient;
- Obtain Section 8 Vouchers/Rent Subsidy (if available and eligible);
- Opportunity for placement in permanent housing; and ultimately
- Self-sufficiency and independence.